

Chairman Rodgers, Ranking Member Smith, and the rest of the Rules Committee, thank you for allowing me to the opportunity to speak on my priorities for the FY24 NDAA.

Our nation faces a myriad of threats from state and nonstate actors across the globe. We are seeing authoritarian regimes, such as China and Russia, expand their reaches into new areas of the world and challenge the sovereignty of our allies. They not only work to achieve these objectives through conventional military means, but also masterfully accomplish their goals through the gray zone. Further complicating matters is the still looming threats posed by extremist groups that continue to operate throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and southeast Asia. Our world has not seen this type of instability since the Cold War.

Further troubling to me is the state of our aging fighter fleet. As you all know, tactical aircraft are critical to achieving and maintaining air dominance during combat operations. Most of our existing tactical air fleet began flying in the 1970s and 1980s and nearly half were older than 25 years old. These issues, compounded by the issues delaying the production of fifth generation fighters, pose serious risks to our nation's ability to maintain air dominance. I hope we can continue to address these challenges in this year's NDAA.

In addition, I write to you today to highlight a Community Funded Project (CFP) that I submitted for Goodfellow AFB (GAFB). Goodfellow Air Force Base and the 17th Training Wing are in the heart of the district, and hold the distinct mission to train, develop, and inspire professional fire-rescue, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance professionals. The 17th Training Wing plays a critical role in our training pipelines graduating over 13,000 world-class ISR and fire-rescue professionals each year from across the Department of Defense and international partners. The great work that is being conducted at GAFB plays an integral role in ensuring our nation's readiness and maintaining our competitive edge in the great power competition.

The high national security demand of our nation is quickly outpacing the capacity of Goodfellow Air Force Base to house the ever-growing stream of new students. The base is currently experiencing a drastic shortage of student housing, complicated by a delay in the construction of a new 400-bed residence hall. While awaiting military construction, the Air Force implemented two temporary solutions to mitigate the 400-bed space deficit for pipeline students. In 2020, a 5-year contract valued at \$9.8 million was executed, leasing temporary dormitories to house 300 students, as well as entering into a service agreement with Angelo State University to lease 110 bed spaces on their campus. Although GAFB has addressed their short-term needs with this contract, this is clearly not a feasible long-term solution to this issue. Although they are happy to support GAFB, Angelo State University takes on a significant burden as well to facilitate this agreement. It not only requires the university to find housing for these service members, but also leads to potential loss in student enrollment for the university. The CFP that I submitted for GAFB would provide critical design and planning funding to streamline the project's development. I hope that you will support this project's inclusion.

As a former fighter pilot and former staffer on the National Security Council, I believe that there is no bill that is more important to pass each year than the NDAA. The FY24 NDAA can provide an opportunity to find solutions to the security challenges our nation faces and address the longstanding needs of our men and women in uniform. I look forward to working with you all in the coming months.